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Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/834,573	BAUM ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Robert C. Scheibel	2616

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 February 2007.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-21,25-32,35-37,39-42 and 44-48 is/are pending in the application.
 - 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-14,19-21,25-28,31,32,35-37,39-42 and 44-48 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 15-18,29 and 30 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>2/07</u> .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

- Examiner acknowledges receipt of Applicant's Amendment received 2/13/2007.
- Claims 47 and 48 are newly added in this Amendment.
- Claims 1-21, 25-32, 35-37, 39-42, and 44-48 are currently pending.

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments, see "Double Patenting Rejections" on page 10, filed 2/13/2007, with respect to the rejection of claims 1 and 39 under obviousness double patenting have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection of claims 1 and 39 under double patenting has been withdrawn.
2. Applicant's arguments, see "Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103" on pages 11-14, filed 2/13/2007, with respect to the rejection of claims 1-21, 25-32, 35-37, 39-42, and 44-46 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant begins by considering the rejection of claims 1-5, 8-14, 19, 20, 27, 28, 39-42, and 44-46 over Dobbins in view of Wiget. On page 11, Applicant summarizes portions of Dobbins and Wiget. On page 12, Applicant addresses independent claims 1 and 39 with respect to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Dobbins in view of Wiget. Applicant's arguments focus on two points.

The first of these is that the rejection does not disclose the limitation of associating customer context information with a logical interface. Applicant contends that a port number is not customer context information. However, the claim language is clearly very broad and the

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examiner is taking a broad, but reasonable, interpretation of this claim. As indicated in the previous rejection and reiterated below, a port number is a portion of the customer context information. Clearly, a port number on which a customer's end system is located provides some useful context related to the customer as it indicates to the switching device which port should be used to route information intended for that customer. As support for this argument, Applicant cites portions of the specification. The Dobbins and Wiget references differ from the present specifications; however, these differences have not been clearly distinguished in the claim language.

The second point on which the Applicant argues is that the two references are not properly combined. Applicant argues that the two references differ in that one deals with operations of a system with populated tables, while the other deals with the process of building VPLSs. However, while Wiget does deal in part with building VPLSs, it also uses the ME-ARP messages cited in the rejection to dynamically update information in the ARP tables as well as extending the existing network to support multicast and broadcast (see the passage from line 28 of column 3 through line 16 of column 4, for example). Examiner respectfully disagrees with the contention that the two references cannot be combined and recommends that the broad claim language be modified to distinguish the claims from these references.

On page 13, Applicant argues that similar arguments apply to claims 2-5, 8-14, 19-20, 40-42, and 44-46. For at least the reasons stated above, Examiner respectfully disagrees.

On page 13, Applicant argues that similar arguments apply to claims 6 and 7. For at least the reasons stated above, Examiner respectfully disagrees.

On pages 13-14, Applicant addresses independent claims 21 and 31 and the related dependent claims. Applicant argues that the combination does not disclose the limitation that each logical interface is uniquely associated with a customer device. Applicant argues that replacing the tunnel end-point IP address with a VPN ID would hinder or destroy the address resolution aspect of Wiget. Again, Examiner is taking a broad, but reasonable, interpretation of the claim language. However, as stated in the previous rejection, the context information is disclosed by the tunnel end point IP address and the VPN ID of Wiget. Fox is merely used to provide explicit details for the contents of this VPN ID. Further, Applicant contends that the prior art does not disclose unique association with a customer device. However, the tunnel end-point IP address and the interface unique VPN-ID identify the end users A and B of Figures 4 and 5 of Wiget as disclosed from line 57 of column 5 to line 16 of column 6. The Fox reference merely indicates that the VPN ID also includes information to identify the customer.

Examiner acknowledges that there are differences between the present invention as disclosed in the present *specification* and the cited prior art. However, the claim language is currently very broad. As such, Examiner recommends amending the claim language to better distinguish these claims from the prior art.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

3. **Claims 1-5, 8-14, 19-20, 27-28, 39-42, and 44-48** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,147,995 to Dobbins, et al in view of U.S. Patent 6,640,251 to Wiget et al.

Regarding claims **1 and 39**, Dobbins discloses a method for processing data, received from a first customer device (one of the end systems labeled 20A-20L in Figure 5, for example) via access facilities, addressed to a second customer device (one of the end systems labeled 20A-20L in Figure 5, for example), the method comprising: a) terminating, with a physical interface, a link of the access facilities (the physical link terminated by ports 1-3 in figure 5, for example); b) associating at least one logical interface with the physical interface (the VLAN(s) with which

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the ports are associated – see Figure 5); c) associating customer context information with the logical interface (the port number represents part of the context information (which is at least the connection identifier of lines 1-4 of column 2) and is associated with a logical interface via the VLAN/Access Port table of Figure 7); and d) upon receiving the data, i) removing at least a part of layer 2 address information from the data to generate resulting data (see lines 12-15 of column 5).

Dobbins does not disclose expressly the limitations of adding the customer context information to the resulting data to generate modified data. However, Wiget discloses these limitations in lines 34-40 of column 4 and lines 61-65 of column 5. In this case, the context information includes the tunnel source IP address. The VPN ID and CPE ID are the resulting data that is generated when the source MAC address is removed. The context information (tunnel source IP address) and the resulting data (VPN ID and CPE ID) are combined (added) to create modified data (the calculated MAC address of line 62 of column 5. Dobbins and Wiget are analogous art because they are from the same field of endeavor of virtual LANs. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Dobbins to create the modified data (calculated MAC address) of Wiget. The motivation for doing so would have been to provide a scalable and server-less solution to Virtual Private LAN Segments by using the ME-ARP of Wiget as suggested in lines 41-43 of column 1. Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Wiget with Dobbins for the benefit of providing a scalable and server-less solution to VPLS to obtain the invention as specified in claims 1 and 39.

Regarding claim 27, Dobbins discloses a method for maintaining carrier data tables, the method comprising: a) terminating, with a physical interface, a link of the access facilities (the physical link terminated by ports 1-3 in figure 5, for example); b) associating at least one logical interface with the physical interface (the VLAN(s) with which the ports are associated – see Figure 5); c) associating customer context information with the logical interface (the port number represents part of the context information (which is at least the connection identifier of lines 1-4 of column 2) and is associated with a logical interface via the VLAN/Access Port table of Figure 7).

Dobbins does not disclose expressly the limitation of upon receiving data from a customer device, adding the customer context information to the resulting data to generate modified data. Dobbins also does not disclose expressly the limitations of if the data is an address advertisement, forwarding the modified data to an edge information update facility or if a table update is received from the edge information update facility, updating a carrier information table. However, Wiget discloses the limitation of upon receiving data from a customer device, adding the customer context information to the resulting data to generate modified data in lines 34-40 of column 4 and lines 61-65 of column 5. In this case, the context information includes the tunnel source IP address. The VPN ID and CPE ID are the resulting data that is generated when the source MAC address is removed. The context information (tunnel source IP address) and the resulting data (VPN ID and CPE ID) are combined (added) to create modified data (the calculated MAC address of line 62 of column 5. Dobbins further discloses the limitation that if the data received from the customer device is an address advertisement (ARP), then forwarding the modified data to an edge information update facility

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(in the passage from line 57 of column 5 through line 16 of column 6; the end station B is the edge information update facility in that it updates its ARP table). Additionally, Dobbins also discloses if a table update is received from the edge information update facility, then updating a carrier information table (this is also disclosed in this passage from line 57 of column 5 through line 16 of column 6; the ARP reply is the table update and the CPE A and CPE B devices, which are the edge routers, update their tables accordingly). Dobbins and Wiget are analogous art because they are from the same field of endeavor of virtual LANs. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Dobbins to create the modified data (calculated MAC address) of Wiget and to update the ARP tables of the affected devices according to the method outlined in Wiget. The motivation for doing so would have been to provide a scalable and server-less solution to Virtual Private LAN Segments by using the ME-ARP of Wiget as suggested in lines 41-43 of column 1. Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Wiget with Dobbins for the benefit of providing a scalable and server-less solution to VPLS to obtain the invention as specified in claim 27.

Regarding claim 40, Dobbins discloses a transport network (elements 15 of figure 5), and an aggregation unit (one of the SFPs 11-14 of figure 5) for processing data, received from a first customer device (one of the end systems labeled 20A-20L in Figure 5, for example) via access facilities, addressed to a second customer device (another one of the end systems labeled 20A-20L in Figure 5, for example), the aggregation unit including (a) a physical interface for terminating a link of the access facilities (the physical link terminated by ports 1-3 in figure 5, for example), (b) at least one logical interface associated with the physical interface (the

VLAN(s) with which the ports are associated – see Figure 5), (c) a storage device for storing customer context information associated with the logical interface (the port number represents part of the context information (which is at least the connection identifier of lines 1-4 of column 2) and is associated with a logical interface via the VLAN/Access Port table of Figure 7), and (e) means for aggregating the modified data at the logical interface with other modified data at other logical interfaces, for trunking on a shared network-facing, communications link (shown in figure 5, for example, where packets from the same VLAN are aggregated together at the respective SFPSs; for example, the packets from VLAN 20 arrive on ports 2 and 3 at SFPS 11 and are aggregated and forwarded to SFPS 14), an access router (one of the SFPSs 11-14 of figure 5), the access router comprising: a) a port for receiving the modified data from the shared, network-facing, communications link (lines 12-15 of column 5); and b) means to forward the modified data, across the transport network, to a second edge device associated with the second customer device (lines 51-54 of column 5).

Dobbins does not disclose expressly (d) means for, upon receiving the data, adding the customer context information to the data to generate modified data or the means for encapsulating the modified data with carrier information. Wiget discloses the limitation of upon receiving the data, adding the customer context information to the data to generate modified data in lines 34-40 of column 4 and lines 61-65 of column 5. In this case, the context information includes the tunnel source IP address. The VPN ID and CPE ID are the resulting data that is generated when the source MAC address is removed. The context information (tunnel source IP address) and the resulting data (VPN ID and CPE ID) are combined (added) to create modified data (the calculated MAC address of line 62 of column 5. Wiget further discloses the limitation

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of encapsulating the modified data with carrier information in lines 57-67 of column 5 which indicates how the modified data (the calculated MAC address) is used to encapsulate the data prior to forwarding it. Dobbins and Wiget are analogous art because they are from the same field of endeavor of virtual LANs. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Dobbins to create the modified data (calculated MAC address) of Wiget. The motivation for doing so would have been to provide a scalable and server-less solution to Virtual Private LAN Segments by using the ME-ARP of Wiget as suggested in lines 41-43 of column 1. Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Wiget with Dobbins for the benefit of providing a scalable and server-less solution to VPLS to obtain the invention as specified in claim 40.

Regarding claim 2, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation the customer context information added to the resulting data is added in the place of the at least a part of the layer 2 address information removed in lines 61-65 of column 5 of Wiget.

Regarding claim 3, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation of aggregating the modified data at the logical interface with other modified data at other logical interfaces, for trunking on a shared, network-facing, communications link is shown in Dobbins in figure 5, for example, where packets from the same VLAN are aggregated together at the respective SFPs; for example, the packets from VLAN 20 arrive on ports 2 and 3 at SFP 11 and are aggregated and forwarded to SFP 14.

Regarding claim 4, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation of saving, in association with the logical interface, layer source address information of the data is

disclosed in lines 17-26 of column 6 of Wiget which indicates that the MAC address is stored in the cache of CPE A and is associated with the logical interface in that it is pulled out of the cache and inserted in the destination MAC location for that interface.

Regarding claim 5, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that at least a portion of the customer context information identifies a unique virtual private network customer is disclosed in lines 61-65 of column 5 of Wiget.

Regarding claim 8, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that at least a portion of the customer context information uniquely identifies the logical interface in lines 61-65 of Wiget since the VPN is the logical interface.

Regarding claim 9, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that at least a portion of the customer context information identifies a class of service level in lines 26-31 of column 2 of Dobbins.

Regarding claim 10, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that at least a portion of the customer context information identifies a quality of service level in lines 26-31 of column 2 of Dobbins.

Regarding claim 11, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitations that f) receiving the modified data from the shared, network-facing, communications link (lines 12-15 of column 5 of Dobbins); and g) encapsulating the modified data with carrier information, used to forward the modified data across the transport network to a second edge device with which the second customer device has access (in lines 57-67 of column 5 of Wiget which indicates how the modified data (the calculated MAC address) is used to encapsulate the data prior to forwarding it).

Regarding claim 12, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that the carrier information includes an address of the second edge device in that the information is forwarded to the CPE B and thus the encapsulating carrier information must necessarily include addressing information for this node (see lines 1-26 of column 6, for an example of the data being forwarded to CPE B which is the second edge device).

Regarding claim 13 and 42, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that the data includes a layer 3 destination address corresponding to a layer 3 address of the second customer device (the end devices have IP addresses that are part of the client or provider address space of the VPLS and thus communications with the end device are via its layer 3 (IP) address), and wherein the address of the second edge device is derived from a layer 3 destination address of the data and at least a part of the customer context information (the IP routing function forwards the data towards the second edge device based on the layer 3 address and thus the edge device address is derived at least in part from layer 3 IP destination address; the VPN Id is also used in this addressing).

Regarding claim 14, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that the carrier information includes service level information in lines 26-31 of column 2 of Dobbins.

Regarding claim 19, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that the layer 2 address information of the data is an Ethernet header (see lines 5-9 and 19-22 of column 2 of Dobbins), wherein the customer context information replaces a value in a layer 2 destination address field of the Ethernet header (lines 61-65 of column 5 of Wiget).

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Regarding claim 20, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that the layer 2 address information of the data is an Ethernet header (see lines 5-9 and 19-22 of column 2 of Dobbins), wherein the customer context information replaces a value in a layer 2 destination address field of the Ethernet header (lines 61-65 of column 5 of Wiget), and wherein a node terminating the shared, network-facing, communications link operates in the promiscuous mode (this is the case as these nodes are accepting multicast and ARP packets.)

Regarding claim 28, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that the carrier information table associates carrier information with a layer 3 destination address and at least a part of customer context information (the end devices have IP addresses that are part of the client or provider address space of the VPLS and thus communications with the end device are via its layer 3 (IP) address; the layer 3 address and the context information are associated with the carrier information in order that all 3 pieces of information are pulled together to properly format the packet as indicated in Wiget.)

Regarding claim 41, the above combination of Wiget and Fox discloses the limitation that the carrier information includes an address of the second edge device (the information is routed to the end device via the second edge device and thus the layer 3 address information of this device must be included to properly route the data).

Regarding claim 44, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that the first customer has a layer 2 address in the replaced MAC device of lines 61-65 of column 5.

Regarding claim 45, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that the first customer has a layer 3 address in the tunnel end-point IP address of lines 61-65 of column 5.

Regarding claim 46, the above combination of Dobbins and Wiget discloses the limitation that the first customer device and the second customer device are provided outside of the edge device of the transport network in figure 5 of Dobbins or figure 1a of Wiget.

Regarding claims 47 and 48, Dobbins discloses the limitation that each of the at least one logical interfaces *may be* associated with only one physical interface, and may not be associated with more than one physical interface. This language does not provide a positive recitation of this limitation as it makes the limitation of the association of logical and physical interfaces optional. As such, patentable weight need not be given to this limitation and the claim is thus disclosed by the combination used in the parent claims 1 and 39.

4. Claims 21, 25-26, 31-32, and 35-37, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,640,251 to Wiget in view of RFC 2685 to Fox et al.

Regarding claim 21, Wiget discloses the limitation of a machine readable medium (in the CPEs (11-14) of figure 1) having stored thereon: a) data received from a first customer device and addressed to a second customer device (the packets sent from the source end system; see figure 5, for example); and b) customer context information (tunnel end-point IP address and the VPN Id information of lines 61-65 of column 5) associated with the logical interface (the VPN itself).

Wiget does not disclose expressly the limitation that the logical interface is uniquely associated with the first customer device or the limitation that at least a part of the customer context information identifies, at least one of (A) the logical interface uniquely, (B) a customer uniquely, and (C) a service level. RFC 2685 discloses that the VPN Id uniquely identifies the customer (the VPN-OID – see section 4 on pages 3-4); this discloses both of the above limitations (the context information is uniquely identified with the customer via the VPN Id and the context information also identifies the customer uniquely.) Wiget and RFC 2685 are analogous art because they are from the same field of endeavor Virtual Private Networking. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Wiget to use the VPN Id as described in RFC 2685. The motivation for doing so would have been to uniquely identify the customer (VPN authority) with the VPN Id as suggested in RFC 2685 in the first full paragraph of page 3. Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine RFC 2685 with Wiget for the benefit of uniquely identify the VPN authority to obtain the invention as specified in claim 21.

Regarding claim 31, Wiget discloses a machine readable medium having stored thereon a customer context-based forwarding table, the customer context-based forwarding table comprising a plurality of entries, each of the entries including: a) carrier information (contained in the ARP table of the CPE which contains information to allow the CPE to properly forward a packet on the proper carrier); and b) at least a part of a layer 3 destination address (the IP address is clearly part of the ARP entry as indicated in, for example, lines 58-59 of column 3) and at least a part of customer-based context information (the VPN Id is also clearly part of this entry; this

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information is required in order to replace the HW source address as described in lines 61-65 of column 5).

Wiget does not disclose expressly the limitation that at least a part of customer-based context information includes information for uniquely identifying a customer, and wherein the information for uniquely identifying a customer is a VPN-OUI. RFC 2685 discloses these limitations in the VPN-OID – see section 4 on pages 3-4. Wiget and RFC 2685 are analogous art because they are from the same field of endeavor Virtual Private Networking. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Wiget to use the VPN Id as described in RFC 2685. The motivation for doing so would have been to uniquely identify the customer (VPN authority) with the VPN Id as suggested in RFC 2685 in the first full paragraph of page 3. Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine RFC 2685 with Wiget for the benefit of uniquely identify the VPN authority to obtain the invention as specified in claim 31.

Regarding claim 25, the above combination of Wiget and Fox discloses the limitation that the machine readable medium further stores carrier information used to forward the data, across the transport network, to an edge device associated with the second customer device (in lines 57-67 of column 5 of Wiget which indicates how the modified data (the calculated MAC address) is used to encapsulate the data prior to forwarding it).

Regarding claim 26, the above combination of Wiget and Fox discloses the limitation that the carrier information includes an address of the edge device associated with the second customer device, and wherein the address of the edge device is based on the address of the

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second customer device and at least a part of the customer context information (the IP routing function forwards the data towards the second edge device based on the layer 3 address and thus the edge device address is derived at least in part from layer 3 IP destination address; the VPN Id is also used in this addressing).

Regarding claim 32, the above combination of Wiget and Fox discloses the limitation that devices of different customers can have the same layer 3 address, such devices being uniquely addressable based on at least a part of their layer 3 address and at least a part of customer-based context information in paragraphs 2-5 of page 2 of Fox.

Regarding claim 35, the above combination of Wiget and Fox discloses the limitation that at least a part of customer-based context information further includes information for uniquely identifying a host of a given customer in the VPN Index field of section 4 of Fox on pages 3-4.

Regarding claim 36, the above combination of Wiget and Fox discloses the limitation that the information for uniquely identifying a host of a given customer is a VPN-Index in the VPN Index field of section 4 of Fox on pages 3-4.

Regarding claim 37, the above combination of Wiget and Fox discloses the limitation of c) a layer 3 address of an egress edge device (the information is routed to the end device via the egress edge device and thus the layer 3 address information of this device must be included to properly route the data).

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5. Claims 6-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,147,995 to Dobbins, et al in view of U.S. Patent 6,640,251 to Wiget et al and in further view of RFC 2685 to Fox et al.

Dobbins and Wiget disclose the limitations of parent claim 5 as indicated in the above rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). However, the combination of Dobbins and Wiget does not disclose expressly the limitations of claims 6 and 7.

Fox discloses the limitation of claim 6 that at least a portion of the customer context information identifies a unique host of the unique virtual private network in the VPN Index field of section 4 of Fox on pages 3-4. Fox further discloses the limitation of claim 7 that at least a portion of the customer context information uniquely identifies the logical interface within a given virtual private network customer in the VPN Index field of section 4 of Fox on pages 3-4.

Wiget and RFC 2685 are analogous art because they are from the same field of endeavor Virtual Private Networking. At the time of the invention it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Wiget to use the VPN Id as described in RFC 2685. The motivation for doing so would have been to uniquely identify the customer (VPN authority) with the VPN Id as suggested in RFC 2685 in the first full paragraph of page 3. Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine RFC 2685 with Wiget for the benefit of uniquely identify the VPN authority to obtain the invention as specified in claims 6 and 7.

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 15-18 and 29-30 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

7. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robert C. Scheibel whose telephone number is 571-272-3169. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday and Thursday from 7:00-5:30 Eastern Time.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Seema S. Rao can be reached on 571-272-3174. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

RCS 4-23-02

Robert C. Scheibel
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 2616

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